

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 6911

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, AS, US

SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN MEDIA CONCENTRATE ON DEFMIN BARNARD'S FORTH-
COMING WASHINGTON VISIT

1. DURING PAST FEW DAYS SEVERAL NEWS STORIES HAVE APPEARED IN AUSTRALIAN PRESS PURPORTING TO GIVE THE "INSIDE STORY" OF U.S.-AUSTRALIAN NEGOTIATIONS ON NORTHWEST CAPE. MOST DISTURBING OF THESE WAS REPORT IN SYDNEY MORNING HERALD DECEMBER 21 WHICH TERMS BARNARD'S FORTHCOMING VISIT "MISSION IMPOSSIBLE" AND SPECULATES THAT BARNARD'S CHANCES OF ESTABLISHING "CONTROL" OVER U.S. OPERATIONS AT STATION AS "ZERO". ARTICLE GOES ON TO STATE THAT MOST BARNARD CAN EXPECT TO ACHIEVE IS SOME "FACE-SAVING FORMULA, PUTTING MORE AUSTRALIANS ON BASE STAFF AND GIVING AUSTRALIAN OFFICIALS GREATER ACCESS TO INSTALLATIONS". STORY ALSO BORADENS SUBJECT OF CONSULTATIONS TO BE DISCUSSED IN NEGOTIATIONS AS INVOLVING NOT ONLY NORTHWEST CAPE BUT PINE GAP AND WOOMERA AS WELL.

2. IN APPEARANCE ON THE ABC RADIO PROGRAM AM DECEMBER 21 DEFMIN BARNARD WAS ASKED WHAT HE HOPED TO ACHIEVE IN WASHINGTON. BARNARD IN EFFECT STATED HE EXPECTED TO REACH AGREEMENT TO MAKE NORTHWEST CAPE A JOINT INSTALLATION AND SECONDLY TO INSURE THAT AUSTRALIA IS GIVEN A GREATER SAY IN OPERATION OF THE
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BASE. BARNARD WENT ON TO SAY ALSO THAT AUSTRALIA WILL

HAVE A POSITION OF RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN THE BASE ITSELF.
WITH REGARD TO THE MATTER OF "CONTROL" BARNARD
IMPLIED THAT THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS ACCEPTED THAT
THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WILL MAINTAIN CONTROL OF THE STATION'S
OPERATIONS UNDER THE 1963 AGREEMENT. BARNARD CONCLUDES
BY STATING THAT HE IS CONFIDENT THAT THE RESULT OF THE
NEGOTIATIONS ALONG THE LINES SUGGESTED WILL BE ACCEPTABLE
TO THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE.

3. SEVERAL AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPERS REPORT STATEMENT
MADE BY GORDON BARTON, NATIONAL CONVENOR OF THE SMALL
NATIONALISTIC AUSTRALIA PARTY TO THE EFFECT THAT U.S.
INSTALLATIONS IN AUSTRALIA ARE A THREAT TO AUSTRALIA'S
SECURITY, DO NOT GUARANTEE AMERICAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE
IN TIME OF WAR, AND THEREFORE SHOULD BE REMOVED.

4. COMMENT: BARNARD'S INTERVIEW ON RADIO NEWS PROGRAM
WAS NOT EXPECTED BY ADOD OFFICIALS INCLUDING FIRST ASSISTANT
SECRETARY PRITCHETT. BARNARD APPARENTLY SAW NEED TO RESPOND TO SPATE
OF DISTORTED ARTICLES. WHILE BARNARD'S STATEMENTS ARE
CONSISTENT WITH THE GENERAL TENOR OF THE AGREEMENT THUS FAR
REACHED WITH THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AND DO NOT GO INTO
DETAIL, THEIR APPEARANCE AT THIS TIME COULD ENCOURAGE
ADDITIONAL PRESS SPECULATION ABOUT THESE NEGOTIATIONS.
ARTICLE IN SYDNEY MORNING HERALD IS SOMEWHAT DISTURBING
SINCE IT APPEARS IN A NORMALLY ANTI-GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER
AND SUGGESTS A LEAK OF INFORMATION FROM OFFICIAL SOURCES IN
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